

Dear Members of the Connecticut Human Services Committee:

Good afternoon, my name is Constanza Segovia and I'm speaking as a leader of Hartford Deportation Defense. Our organization fights for justice for undocumented people in the Greater Hartford area. We help coordinate the HUSKY For Immigrants coalition. **We support HB 6616: An Act Relating to the Expansion of HUSKY Health Benefits for Persons Ineligible Due to Immigration Status** and hope that we can continue increasing the age limits year after year so that soon all low-income folks in Connecticut can have access to HUSKY. You will hear many of our members' testimony today.

This year, our coalition is excited to share a [new comprehensive and non-partisan research report by the RAND corporation](#).

I didn't want to miss the opportunity to share a few highlights during this public hearing:

1. **This report estimates the cost of FULL EXPANSION of HUSKY to all income-eligible people regardless of immigration status to be \$83.6 million.** This is in stark contrast to the \$200 million fiscal note we saw from DSS in 2021.
2. Out of the \$83.6 million cost, **\$63 million would be recouped in savings** from a reduction in uncompensated care.
3. Although we don't yet have a fiscal note for HB 6616, we can estimate **the cost of expansion up to age 26 to be approximately \$18.4 million** based on the RAND report cost analysis.

Additionally, **there have been concerns about HUSKY coverage being considered a "public charge"** and potentially impeding folks from accessing a pathway to citizenship in the future. We appreciate this concern and want to assure you that it is not the case. [Yale Law School's Worker and Immigrant Rights Advocacy Clinic have drafted a memo about the topic](#). Basically, HUSKY benefits are not a form of "public cash assistance." From the report: "*Under current federal regulations, HUSKY is generally not considered a benefit for "public charge" purposes because it is not a form of public cash assistance. 8 C.F.R. § 212.21 (2022) (defining "public cash assistance" as Supplemental Security Income, TANF, and non-federal cash benefit programs).*"

We know many of you want to support this bill becoming law, and we want to assure you that it would be perceived favorably by your constituents. Connecticut voters, across party lines, support the expansion of the HUSKY program for undocumented people. This is based on 2022 opinion research conducted by *Lake Research Partners*. [Some highlights here](#).

Most importantly, this policy will improve quality of life for our undocumented families and neighbors, and is an important step in advancing health equity in our state.

Thank you for your time,
Constanza Segovia
Hartford Deportation Defense